

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

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SS-15 USIA-06 /074 W

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R 281500Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1731

INFO AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 1021

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR EG RP

SUBJECT: PHILIPPINE MUSLIM SITUATION

1. CAIRO PRESS ON JAN 25 CAIRRIED A DENUNCIATION BY ABDEL HALIM MAHMOUD, SHEIKH OF EL AZHAR, A LEADING FIGURE IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD, AGAINST REPRESSIVE MEASURES LEVELLED AT MUSLIMS IN THE PHILIPPINES. HE REPORTEDLY APPEALED TO THE U.N. AND WORLD ORGANIZATIONS TO INTERFERE AND URGED MUSLIMS EVERYWHERE TO ACT EXPEDITIOUSLY TO "SAVE FILIPINO MUSLIMS".

2. POL/ECON COUNSELOR MENTIONED SHEIKH'S COMMENTS DURING A CALL ON PHILIPPINE CHARGE ALMENDRALA ON JAN 28. LATTER RESPONDED HE COULD NOT GIVE IMMEDIATE REASON FOR MAHMOUD'S STRONG STATEMENT, BUT THAT ASSOCIATED PRESS STORIES FILED FROM AMANILA ABOUT MASSACRES OF MUSLIMS AND USE OF NAPALM BY FILIPINO ARMED FORCES COULD VERY WILL HAVE PROMPTED STATEMENT.

3. WHEN ASKED ABOUT RECENT FILIPINO VISITORS TO CAIRO, ALEXMENDRALA INDICATED THAT EXECUTIVE SECRETARY ALEX MELCHOR, WITH AN ACCOMPANYING PATY OF 4 PERSONS, HAD BEEN THROUGH CAIRO TWICE
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RECENTLY. MELCHOR WAS HERE ON JAN 13 AND AT THAT TIME WENT TO

ASWAN TO SEE PRESIDENT SADAT. MELCHOR'S PLANE WAS DELAYED, HOWEVER, AND SADAT HAD ALREADY DEPARTED. MELCHOR THEN SAW PRIMIN HEGAZI INSTEAD AND DISCUSSED WITH HIM GENERAL SITUATION OF PHILIPPINE/ EGYPTIAN RELATIONS AND MUSLIM PROBLEM. MELCHOR DEPARTED CAIRO FOR JIDDA FOLLOWING DAY AND MET THERE WITH MEMBERS OF MORO NAT LIB FRONT. ALMENDRALA DESCRIBED THIS GROUP AS "YOUNG FILIPINOS WHO HAVE NO REAL POWER BASE AND REPRESENT VERY LITTLE". MELCHOR RETURNED TO CAIRO ON JAN 19 AND THIS TIME SAW PRESIDENT SADAT.

4. ALMENDRALA SAID SADAT WAS "SYMPATHETIC" TO POINTS MELCHOR MADE. IN SAYING THIS, ALMENDRALA COMMENTED "YOU KNOW SADAT HAS HIS OWN COPTIC MINORITY HERE".

5. ALMENDRALA ATTRIBUTED EGYPTIAN INTEREST IN PHILIPPINE MUSLIM P PROBLEM TO SOME EXTENT TO INTRAMURAL POLICS IN ISLAMIC CONF AND ISLAMIC LEAGUE AND TO COMPETITIVE EFFORTS OF HASSAN EL TUHAMI, SYG OF ISLAMIC CONF (ALSO EGYPTIAN PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR FOR ADMINI- STRATIVE AFFAIRS); ABDEL AZIZ KAMEL (EGYPTIAN DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER FOR RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS); AND TEWFIQ OWEIDA, HEAD OF SUPREME ISLAMIC COUNCIL. WITH REGARD TO BROADER ASPECTS OF PROBLEM, ALMENDRALA SAID MALAYSIAN PRIMMIN TUN ABDUL RAZAK PLAYED A LARGE ROLE IN KEEPING PHILIPPINE MUSLIM MINORITY SITUA- TION STIRRED UP. THERE HAS BEEN BAD BLOOD BETWEEN RAZAK AND PRES MARCOS GROWING OUT OF PHILIPPINE CLAIM TO SABAH.

6. ALMENDRALA SAID THAT IN ADDITON TO MELCHOR PARTY THERE HAD BEEN OTHER FILIPPINO VISITORS: CONGRESSMAN RASCHID LUCKMAN, A MUSLIM, (NOW IN CAIRO AND UP TO NO GOOD) AND EAN ABDULLAH MADALI OF FACULTY OF TRAINING AT MINDANAO STATE UNIVERSITY WHO HAD MET WITH SUPREME ISLAMIC COUNCIL HEAD OWEIDA DURING PAST WEEK. JUST KEEPING ON TOP OF FILIPINO MUSLIMS CONTACTING KEY LEADERS IN ARAB WORLD IS A REAL PROBLEM.

7. WHEN ASKED ABOUT WHETHER MELCHOR AHHAD GONE TO LIBYA, ALMENDRALA RESPONDED HE HAD VISITED TRIPOLI PRIOR TO COMING TO CAIRO THE FIRST TIME. MELCHOR HAD NOT SEEN QADHAFFI, BUT HAD MET WITH JALLOUD. ALMENDRALA ADDED THAT EFFORTS TO TURN OFF LIBYAN FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR MUSLIM INSURGENT ACTIVITIES IS, OF COURSE. MAJOR FACTOR IN SITUATION.

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